

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.121 as follows (see the accompanying "marked up" version pursuant to §1.121):

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1. (Twice Amended) An absorbent article comprising:

a main body including a liquid-pervious top sheet, a back sheet and an absorbent core sandwiched between the top sheet and the back sheet;

a layer containing a skin-protective ingredient; and

a support layer for covering the layer containing the skin-protective ingredient, and the support layer being provided on a surface of the main body to be in contact with skin of a wearer, wherein;

the solubility in water of the support layer is promoted at 25°C or higher, and/or the moisture absorbability or the solubility in water of the support layer is promoted at a relative humidity of at least 30 %.

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3. (Twice Amended) The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1,

wherein the layer containing the skin-protective ingredient is formed of a compound capable of forming an oily film on the skin of the wearer.

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4. (Amended) The absorbent article as set forth in claim 3,

wherein the layer containing the skin-protective ingredient can be fluidized at 35°C or higher.

5. (Twice Amended) The absorbent article as set forth in claim 3,

wherein the layer containing the skin-protective ingredient is formed of at least one compound selected from the group consisting of liquid polyisoprene, squalane, pristane, ozocerite, ceresine, microcrystalline wax, polyethylene powder, liquid paraffin, petroleum jelly, and paraffin.

6. (Amended) The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1,

wherein the layer containing the skin-protective ingredient and the support layer are located on a surface of the top sheet.

7. (Twice Amended) The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1,

which further includes at least one of a leak-preventive cuff for preventing side leakage and a leg cuff for preventing leakage through the area around the wearer's thighs, and at least one of the leak-preventive cuff and the leg cuff are located between the top sheet and the layer containing the skin-protective ingredient and the support layer.